

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9988

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PDIP, CH, SN, TH, ASEAN, PEPR

SUBJ: THAI PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK CHOMANAN'S

VISIT TO PRC

1. (BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED) THAI PRIME MINISTER GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHOMANAN'S VISIT TO PRC HAS RECEIVED SUBSTANTIAL COVERAGE IN ENGLISH, MALAY, CHINESE, AND TAMIL PRESS. ENGLISH LANGUAGE STRAITS TIMES AND MALAY BERITA HARIAN HAVE CARRIED EDITORIALS. BERITA HARIAN EDITORIAL OF MARCH 31 MENTIONED NEED FOR KRIANGSAK TO DISCUSS QUESTION OF "COMMUNIST TERRORISM" WITH CHINESE LEADERS, IN ORDER TO AVOID MISUNDERSTANDING OF THAILAND'S ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE PROBLEM; AND NOTED APPRECIATION OF ASEAN COUNTRIES FOR PRC SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL CONCEPT OF ASEAN.

2. LENGTHY EDITORIAL IN APRIL 3 STRAITS TIMES NOTED SUCCESS OF KRIANGSAK VISIT, AND COMMENTED THAT PLANS

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FOR FURTHER RECIPROCAL VISITS INDICATE "HOW SWIFTLY CHANGES CAN BE EFFECTED ONCE DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS ARE ADOPTED." SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS COVERING TRADE, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION WERE CITED AS CONCRETE RESULTS OF THE VISIT. IN POLITICAL RELATIONS THE EDITORIAL NOTES THAT "PEKING AND BANGKOK HAVE A CONGRUENCE OF INTEREST IN SEEING THAT BORDER WARS IN

INDOCHINA DO NOT SPREAD AND ARE NOT MAGNIFIED, THEREBY CURBING VIETNAMESE, AND PERHAPS ALSO RUSSIAN, INFLUENCE IN THE AREA." NOTING THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE "QUESTION OF COMMUNIST INSURGENCY," EDITORIAL SAYS KRIANGSAK, WHEN PRESSED BY NEWSMEN, DESCRIBED THIS AS AN "INTERNAL PROBLEM" FOR WHICH THAILAND "DID NOT LOOK TO OTHER COUNTRIES FOR A SOLUTION." EDITORIAL CONCLUDES BY NOTING THAT CHINESE "USED" KRIANGSAK'S VISIT TO REAFFIRM SUPPORT FOR ASEAN AND A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA. THE ANTI-SOVIET THRUST OF CHINA'S SUPPORT FOR ASEAN, HOWEVER, INDICATES THAT THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY FOR PRC BACKING, AND "WHILE WE HAVE EVERY REASON TO WANT TO CULTIVATE BETTER TIES WITH CHINA, AS A GROUP THERE IS NO DESIRE TO GET CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE IN ANY SINO-SOVIET STRUGGLE FOR POWER. HENCE IN SINO-ASEAN RELATIONS, WE SHALL HAVE TO PROCEED WITH CAUTION AND REALISM."
(END UNCLASSIFIED).

3. (BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) COMMENT: THE STRAITS TIMES EDITORIAL PROBABLY REFLECTS OFFICIAL THINKING ON CHINA--THAT RECOGNITION IS INEVITABLE, BUT SHOULD BE APPROACHED WITH CAUTION.
INGRAHAM

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